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Chairman:	Mr. ESCOVAR SALOM	(Venezuela)
later:	Mr. MAZILU (Vice Chairman)	(Romania)
later:	Mr. ESCOVAR SALOM	(Venezuela)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 151: MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM (continued)

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AGENDA ITEM 151: MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM (continued) (A/51/70 S/1996/135, A/51/74-S/1996/163, A/51/84-S/1996/211, A/51/87, A/51/208-S/1996/543, A/51/210, A/51/216-S/1996/563, A/51/261, A/51/284, A/51/336, A/51/375, A/51/387-S/1996/767)

1. Mr. CALERO RODRIGUES (Brazil) said that Brazil's uncompromising rejection of terrorism reflected its aversion to violence and its profound democratic convictions. Brazil's 1988 Constitution explicitly categorized terrorist acts as serious crimes or felonies. Brazilian legislation on extradition qualified terrorism as a political crime, but in the current reform of its criminal code the Brazilian Congress was examining proposed legislation which, if adopted, would typify terrorist activity as a common felony.

2. While its region was comparatively free from manifestations of terrorism, Brazil was conscious of the need to combat other closely related crimes such as drug trafficking, arms smuggling and money laundering, and was actively involved in regional and subregional efforts to do so.

3. Brazil firmly believed that the United Nations had a decisive role to play in tackling the complex legal and political challenges involved in enhancing the effectiveness of the existing regime to combat terrorism and devising new approaches. The purposes and principles of the Charter provided useful guidance in that regard. Brazil welcomed the determination to fight terrorism expressed by the five permanent members of the Security Council in their recent ministerial declaration. If the global effort to fight terrorism was to be effective, however, it should be pursued on a multilateral basis within the United Nations. The establishment of a comprehensive legal framework dealing with all aspects of the matter deserved priority attention. Meanwhile, the international community must continue to address the underlying causes of terrorism in the social, economic and political spheres and work together to foster a culture of tolerance and peace.

4. Mr. De SILVA (Sri Lanka) said that the horrific occurrences of the past year in various places, including Sri Lanka, seemed to have awakened the somnolent conscience of the world and stimulated the international community to action with a new sense of responsibility and urgency. The recent Ministerial Conference on Terrorism attended by the foreign ministers and ministers responsible for security of the countries of the Group of Seven and the Russian Federation was evidence of that encouraging trend. Sri Lanka hoped that the new- found enthusiasm would not evaporate and that, despite the considerable difficulties, the goal of eradicating the plague of terrorism would be pursued with determination and will.

5. Terrorism which arose out of internal armed conflict, as in the case of Sri Lanka, presented particular difficulties. Such conflicts had only incidental international dimension, where another State was involved indirectly by its failure to take preventive action. In such situations where terrorism was not the consequence of State-sponsored action but rather of activity that was

tolerated in another State, the problems that arose could be said to fall somewhere between domestic law and international law and thus might even require the development of new legal principles.

6. From that point of view, the adoption by the General Assembly in 1994 of the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, represented a major step forward. While the Declaration itself was of a recommendatory nature and had no binding force, its significance for the development of new legal norms could not be underestimated. By becoming a party to a solemn declaration of legal principles which also recommended a course of conduct, a State assumed the duty to comply and the obligation to act.

7. From the standpoint of terrorist acts committed in the context of an internal conflict, the 1994 Declaration embodied certain cardinal principles. First, the international community unequivocally condemned all acts, methods and practices of terrorism as criminal and unjustifiable wherever and by whomsoever committed which, inter alia, threatened the territorial integrity and security of States. Second, it accepted the principle that criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes were in any circumstances unjustifiable, whatever the considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature that might be invoked to justify them. Those two principles affirmed the principle that the end did not justify the means. On the contrary, in such cases, the means adopted might vitiate the end.

8. Third, in discharging their obligation to eliminate terrorism, States were enjoined to refrain from, inter alia, acquiescing in activities within their territories which were directed towards the commission of such acts. That principle was even more important than the first two because it challenged the international community to take effective action and to adopt practical measures. The duty not to acquiesce in such activities meant that a State should take positive steps to prevent even the commission of acts which were preparatory to the commission of terrorist acts in another State. With respect to implementation, particular attention should be paid to the problem of proof when it came to the operation of clandestine organizations. Once an organization had been shown to engage in terrorist activity in one country and there was cogent evidence of such involvement, its designation as a terrorist organization in the country where acts were committed should be prima facie evidence, if not conclusive proof, anywhere in the world, of the nature of its activities and sufficient to include, for purposes of liability, front organizations and other devices set up to conceal its true identity.

9. The prohibition against the financing by States of terrorist activities should include the act of permitting the collection by any non-State entity of funds intended to benefit a terrorist organization. The concept of terrorist installations should include establishments operating as "liaison offices" or "information offices" which, apart from disseminating false propaganda and inciting or encouraging terrorism, were also secretly engaged in the preparation of terrorist acts.

10. One of the principal causes of the continuance of terrorist movements was the sustenance they received from hard-core supporters and sympathizers resident abroad who exploited rights granted under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. The extreme laxity in enforcing the provisions concerning conditions of entry had led to enormous problems both for the countries that had indiscriminately admitted such persons and for their countries of nationality. It was therefore necessary to re-examine the whole question of the granting of refugee status and, even after an asylum seeker was admitted to a State, to maintain strict surveillance of his subsequent activities. The conditions for expulsion from the admitting State or return to the country of origin also needed to be considered in the light of both the current and potential danger arising from his continued stay in the receiving State as well as from the State in which he had sought refuge.

11. It was clear that the widespread phenomenon of vast sums being contributed by so-called refugees represented the gross distortion of a system of protection into an engine of oppression against the State of origin and its people. In such cases, the protecting State had unwittingly become a provider for those who sought to terrorize and torment the people of the country from which they had emigrated.

12. While welcoming the several initiatives that had been taken, especially by the Governments of the United States of America, the United Kingdom and France, to address the problem, his delegation noted that certain issues, such as the problem of suicide bombers, had not yet received sufficient attention, although it was difficult to see how the international community could deal with such a pathological phenomenon.

13. Terrorism was a crime against humanity, and it was ironic that those who professed to be liberators seemed to be overly concerned with the punctilious observance of lesser human rights when the supreme right, the right to life, was at stake. The international community must therefore formulate clear principles to combat the evil in their midst. His delegation unreservedly supported the initiatives before the Committee and hoped that its efforts would result in a convention which would receive general acceptance from the international community.

14. Mr. Mazilu (Romania), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

15. Mr. BAALI (Algeria) said that only after the problem of international terrorism had reached unprecedented proportions and countries like his own had fought it alone for many years had it finally been acknowledged that international terrorism recognized no frontiers and was not linked to a particular civilization, religion or geographical area. The challenge currently before the international community was to cooperate in implementing effective measures to combat that scourge. Although the adoption of the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism had been a hopeful sign, concrete day-to-day action was still necessary. Unfortunately, international terrorism fed on the persistent lack of a coordinated response and even the tolerance of such activities. The commitment of States to strengthening bilateral, regional and international cooperation was the basic requirement for the success of international efforts.

16. The actions described in the Secretary-General's report (A/51/336) were an initial step in mobilizing the international community to deal with that issue. In the view of his delegation, however, paragraph 8 of General Assembly resolution 50/53 had not been taken fully into consideration. His delegation, along with many others, had supported the elaboration of a general legal instrument or framework convention covering all aspects of terrorist activity, rather than the current fragmented approach. Such an instrument would also cover new forms of terrorism which had not been foreseen when the existing conventions had been drafted.

17. Algeria believed that an international institutional framework for combating terrorism was needed. His delegation supported the United States call for a convention on terrorist bombing and the establishment of working groups for its elaboration. Joint efforts to combat terrorism required greater solidarity and cooperation in order to be successful.

18. Mr. PELEG (Israel) said that for years, the ability to combat international terrorism effectively had been hampered by two fundamental misconceptions: that certain goals could justify or mitigate acts of terrorism and that, in the war against terrorism, neutrality was a viable option.

19. For decades, apologists had tried to convince the world that certain goals were so hallowed that terrorist acts could be justified in their pursuit. There was a growing consensus in the international community, however, that no goal could legitimize the murder of civilians and other innocents. Moreover, the international community was recognizing that those who used cherished goals as justification for their crimes were actually doing a grave injustice to those goals.

20. However, the second misconception - that neutrality was a viable option in the war against terror - remained far too prevalent. Neutrality could take the form of granting sanctuary to terrorists and their supporters, permitting the free flow of funds and traffic in arms and matériel used in terrorist attacks, or turning a blind eye to the use of diplomatic missions for terrorist communications.

21. With the recognition that terrorism, whatever its motive, was criminal and unjustifiable and that every State unwilling to be an accomplice to terrorism must actively oppose it, international cooperation against terrorism must focus on three areas. First, individual States must enact effective anti-terrorist legislation. When terrorist activity did occur, States must be persistent in ensuring that those involved were brought to justice. Second, terrorist organizations had long recognized that they could only function effectively with a worldwide network of cooperation and informational exchange. The international community had been slow to realize that it must respond in kind. Only through concerted action could it obtain all the information and experience required to eliminate the infrastructure that supported terrorism. Lastly, States which created an atmosphere in which terrorism could flourish must be made to pay the price. Concurrently, the international community must recognize that for some States, the fight against terrorism required extraordinary courage, and those States must be shown that they did not stand alone.

22. His delegation was disappointed by the attempts of certain Member States to use the current debate as a forum for advancing a political agenda. Terrorism was a global problem faced by all, regardless of race, nationality or religion. The proponents of terrorism had many tools at their disposal, but there were two without which they could not function: disunity among States and a lack of will in the international community. If it deprived terrorists of those tools, then together the international community would win the battle.

23. Mr. AL-HAYEN (Kuwait) recalled that the terrorist acts witnessed on Kuwaiti soil in recent years had been followed by the Iraqi invasion in 1990, which represented a highly repugnant form of terrorism with no modern precedent that continued to have a damaging impact on the entire region. The Iraqi regime continued to delay implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions and was forcibly holding more than 600 Kuwaitis captive.

24. In view of its cruel experiences of terrorism, Kuwait was at the forefront in demanding that such criminal acts, which hindered development and consumed human and material resources, should be countered with firm resolve. It shared the concern generated by the recent general rise in terrorism and called for increased efforts to combat and eliminate the phenomenon. International solidarity was a crucial means of achieving that end. Bilateral, regional and international cooperation should therefore be undertaken to devise effective practical measures with a view to condemning terrorism and its perpetrators, maintaining the integrity and sovereignty of States, complying with obligations under international law to surrender terrorists and pooling information on such terrorists.

25. Mr. SERGIWA (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), citing the pernicious effects of terrorism, said it was only natural that the General Assembly should pursue its efforts to uproot that danger, as innocent victims continued to pay the price for the international community's failure to do so. His own country was still prey to the terrorist practices of certain advanced States and was also subjected to various threats and pressures.

26. The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya condemned all direct and indirect forms of State terrorism, particularly those aimed at imposing control over other peoples. It had endorsed United Nations resolutions aimed at combating all forms of terrorism and had acceded to most international conventions relating to offences and acts committed on board aircraft. In addition, its internal legislation imposed the heaviest penalties on the perpetrators of terrorist crimes.

27. His country had requested the convening of a special session of the General Assembly with a view, inter alia, to defining international terrorism. He recognized the difficulties entailed in arriving at a definition that was acceptable to all States, some of which believed that it ought to include legitimate popular armed struggle for self-determination and freedom from foreign domination and occupation. The use of economic embargoes and nuclear arsenals to subdue States into submission should also be taken into account, as they were highly dangerous forms of terrorism and violated the basic principles of international law, particularly non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

28. His delegation hoped that the international community would be successful in addressing and eliminating the causes of terrorism. To that end it advocated strengthening exchanges of technical and legal assistance with a view to creating an international climate where all peoples could live in security, peace, equality and cooperation.

29. Mr. LAVALLE (Guatemala) said that the gravity of the problem of terrorism in the modern world could not be overestimated. There was also no way that terrorism could be idealized - there was neither nobility nor heroism in acts of violence whose intentional consequences were indiscriminate murder or mutilation of innocent human beings.

30. As terrorists had exploited the vulnerabilities of modern technology in committing their destructive acts, so the international community must make use of every possible technological advance to strike at the vulnerabilities of terrorist organizations.

31. Comprehensive action against terrorism must cover all aspects of human activity. The Secretary-General's report had described impressive developments in the international community's efforts to eliminate terrorism. The proposals put forward by the United States of America, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom also merited further study. It would be helpful if, in his next report, the Secretary-General could provide updated information on reservations and declarations made by States parties to the international conventions against terrorist activities.

32. Mr. WENAWESER (Liechtenstein) regretted the persistence and increase of terrorist incidents, all of which his country unequivocally condemned on account of their negative impact on human rights and fundamental freedoms and, ultimately, international peace and security. He therefore noted with satisfaction the growing commitment to regional and international cooperation to fight and prevent terrorism. He fully supported the milestone Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, the application of which would bring the end goal much closer. Further action was still required, however.

33. In that connection, he noted with interest the proposals made, including the proposal by the United Kingdom that a further declaration on the topic should be adopted. However, bearing in mind the different forums in which terrorism was currently being discussed, an inconsistent approach that could bring contradictory results should be avoided. In his view, the Sixth Committee should remain the body that dealt with United Nations efforts to combat terrorism.

34. Liechtenstein had consistently rejected the notion that terrorists violated human rights. The principle that States were responsible for protecting human rights should not be undermined, although discussions on terrorism clearly did have a human rights dimension. Further measures to combat terrorism should be consistent with existing human rights standards and thus preserve the balance between those measures and the promotion and protection of human rights and freedoms. In that connection, he fully supported the United Kingdom view that the Sixth Committee should not take any decisions which could be construed as an attempt to amend the aforementioned Declaration. He also endorsed the

established interpretation and practice concerning the exclusion clauses and non-refoulement provisions of that important legal instrument and looked forward to continuing informal consultations on the matter.

35. Mr. AL-THANI (Qatar) said that terrorism was growing ever more dangerous and complex as a result of its links to organized crime, the illegal arms trade, drugs trafficking and high technology. Moreover, terrorists could potentially acquire nuclear technology and materials. The international community was responsible for combating terrorism. The Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism was thus a prerequisite for the drafting of an international legal instrument to address terrorism in general, a task which should fall to the Sixth Committee and the International Law Commission. For its part, Qatar had acceded to most international conventions relating to terrorism and attached great importance to them.

36. Mrs. DASKALOPOUPOU-LIVADA (Greece) said that her delegation fully subscribed to the statement on the item made by the representative of Ireland. She then recalled the killing of 18 innocent Greek citizens in Egypt in April 1996 and expressed the hope that the Egyptian authorities would bring the perpetrators to justice.

37. Greece was party to all the relevant United Nations conventions relating to terrorism and strictly adhered to the obligations arising therefrom. Her delegation was prepared to study further initiatives aimed at combating terrorism, provided that they did not prejudice human rights and fundamental freedoms or offer pretexts for their violation. Future efforts to combat terrorism should continue to be guided by that principle.

38. Mr. AL-ADHAMI (Iraq) said that Iraq condemned terrorist acts and that its internal laws punished those who perpetrated or abetted such acts. It supported all efforts to combat terrorism and believed that an international conference should be held to achieve a definition of terrorism that was acceptable to all States with a view to ensuring that certain delegations made no further attempts to alter the concept. A distinction should be made between terrorist acts and the right of peoples to self-determination and to resist occupation, as affirmed in various United Nations resolutions. Any definition of terrorism should also take into account the use by States of technologically sophisticated means which caused infrastructural damage and spread fear with a view to imposing control. The victims of such forms of terrorism were far more numerous than those of terrorist acts committed by individuals. Under no circumstances, however, should measures to combat terrorism prejudice fundamental human rights principles. It was also essential that all discussions of terrorism should address State terrorism, as certain States organized and financed terrorist operations with a view to destabilizing and toppling regimes in other States. Many innocent victims had been killed during the course of such operations in Iraq.

39. He wished to remind the representative of Kuwait of the Kuwaiti Government's policy and actions towards Iraq, of which he was apparently unaware. The Kuwaiti Government financed and supported gangs of outlaws whose terrorist acts in Iraq, aimed at destabilizing the regime, had killed many innocent civilians. It also financed the imposition of the no-flight zones in

northern and southern Iraq, which was a unilateral and illegal decision unrelated to the relevant United Nations resolutions. Kuwait was thus violating its obligations under international law and the Charter of the United Nations. The country was also the centre of preparations for military aggression against Iraq, which represented a further violation of the Charter. Such examples shed light on the terrorist policy pursued by the Kuwaiti Government, whose representative decried acts of terrorism while forgetting those committed by his own Government.

40. Mr. MUABEZI (Indonesia) said that, in the light of the alarming increase in international terrorism in recent years, his delegation supported the speedy implementation of the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, adopted by the General Assembly in 1994. His country had consistently condemned international terrorism as a criminal activity, whether committed by individuals or by groups of States. The menace of terrorism could be dealt with only through concerted action; it was therefore vital for States to enhance international cooperation at all levels and to implement fully the relevant bilateral and international agreements. He recalled that the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries had called, at its eleventh summit, in 1995, for the urgent conclusion and effective implementation of a comprehensive international convention on counter-terrorism.

41. The report of the Secretary-General (A/51/336) provided a firm basis for further deliberations on the topic. His delegation noted with satisfaction that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) had contributed to eliminating the root causes of terrorism by raising public awareness of the dangers posed by various conflicts. The UNESCO Culture of Peace Programme and the programme on education for peace, human rights, democracy and international understanding were of particular importance. It was also appropriate that, within the framework of the United Nations Year for Tolerance (1995), UNESCO had been mandated to hold regional meetings, concerts, broadcasts and festivals aimed at the progressive elimination of terrorism.

42. Mr. Escovar Salom (Venezuela) resumed the Chair.

43. Ms. ZABAIDAH (Brunei Darussalam) expressed appreciation for the information contained in the Secretary-General's report (A/51/336). Her country, like any other country, abhorred terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Adherence to the existing international instruments on counter-terrorism was crucial to enhancing the efforts to eradicate international terrorism, and cooperation at all levels would further enhance the effectiveness of such efforts. Her delegation was keenly interested in the offer made by some delegations to provide their expertise in implementing the existing conventions. In addition, her delegation was studying the United Kingdom proposal.

44. Mr. BENITEZ SAENZ (Uruguay) said that his delegation, while fully concurring with the views expressed at the previous meeting by the representative of Bolivia on behalf of the Rio Group, wished to emphasize several points.

45. The Secretary-General's report (A/51/336) provided a valuable summary of the efforts to eliminate the scourge of terrorism through cooperation between

States within the framework of international law. His country was participating actively in the various international forums on the topic, and was doing its part to pursue the perpetrators of terrorist acts. Such acts undermined both democratic institutions and economic development in the Latin American region and worldwide.

46. He wished to reaffirm his delegation's view that, in accordance with the principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations, the fight against terrorism must be carried out with respect for the human rights of the perpetrators of such acts. It was possible to strengthen international cooperation in that area without detriment to the sovereignty of each State. The 24 measures recommended by the Ministerial Conference on Terrorism (A/51/261) provided a useful basis for such cooperation.

47. His delegation further endorsed the suggestion made in the Secretary-General's report that a convention should be drafted to deal specifically with the threat of terrorist bombings. Furthermore, the international community must use every means at its disposal to prevent terrorists from being able to use nuclear weapons to achieve their criminal ends.

48. Lastly, his delegation wished to express its appreciation to the United Kingdom for its proposal and was prepared to work with other delegations to ensure that the proposal obtained the necessary consensus.

49. Mr. KULYK (Ukraine) said that his country resolutely condemned international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Terrorist acts could not be justified, regardless of their purpose or by whom they were committed. Those who incited and perpetrated such acts should be brought to justice. In that connection, his delegation wished to stress the importance of the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism.

50. Often linked to other criminal activities such as the illegal arms trade, drug trafficking and money laundering, terrorism knew no boundaries, and no one State was safe against it; effective and concerted international cooperation was therefore essential. His country had always participated actively in the activities undertaken within the framework of the United Nations to develop and implement measures to prevent international terrorism and to punish its perpetrators. Nevertheless, more efficient international cooperation in that area depended largely on the actions taken by States at the national level.

51. Ukraine was already a party to most of the conventions and protocols mentioned in the preamble to the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism. In addition, Parliament was considering draft legislation which would enable Ukraine to ratify the Montreal Convention on the Marking of Plastic Explosives for the Purpose of Detection.

52. The time had come to change the practice of introducing an international legal instrument pertaining to international terrorism only after significant international incidents had already taken place. For that reason, his delegation endorsed the suggestion contained in paragraph 36 of document A/51/336 concerning the need to promulgate international treaties in areas which were not covered by existing treaties.

53. His delegation wished to express its appreciation to the delegations of the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States of America for their initiatives designed to strengthen international cooperation in the field of counter-terrorism. The proposals concerning the possible elaboration of two new conventions on the suppression of terrorist bombings and of nuclear terrorism, and the drafting of a further declaration in implementation of the 1994 Declaration deserved serious consideration.

54. Lastly, the international Convention on the Safety of the United Nations and Associated Personnel contained provisions for instituting criminal proceedings against persons accused of attacking United Nations peacekeepers. His delegation called upon all States to ratify or accede to that Convention so as to permit its early entry into force.

55. Mr. ELARABY (Egypt) said that terrorism could not be linked exclusively to any particular geographical region, civilization, culture or religion; the distorted thinking from which it stemmed could be found even in the most stable and prosperous of environments. In recent years, it had taken on forms that had the outward appearance of legitimacy while carrying within them the seeds of malignancy.

56. Some countries and Governments were still sponsoring terrorism, and they provided terrorists with financial support and permitted them to use their territory as a base and a shelter in order to achieve political goals and undermine the stability of other countries.

57. Terrorism in all its forms was a flagrant violation of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations; it jeopardized friendly relations between States, posed a threat to international peace and security, impeded international cooperation and undermined human rights and fundamental freedoms. State terrorism also found expression in the illegal acts committed by occupying forces against peoples under occupation. In that connection, the acts of violence that had recently taken place in the occupied Palestinian territories, resulting in 70 casualties, of whom 60 had been innocent Palestinian civilians, could only be deplored. Such actions could not solve problems but could only widen the gulf between the parties.

58. In seeking to eliminate terrorism, the international community must take full account of the rights guaranteed by international law to peoples under foreign occupation and of their right to self-determination. To overlook such rights might in itself give rise to desperation and despair.

59. On 31 January 1992, following the meeting of the Council at the level of Heads of State and Government, the members of the Council had expressed their deep concern over acts of international terrorism and had emphasized the need for the international community to deal effectively with all such acts. Member States must make a concerted effort to implement the provisions of the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism and of the numerous conventions that addressed different aspects of terrorism. His delegation supported the suggestion that the Assembly should adopt a declaration on the question of political asylum at its current session as a means of promoting the

implementation of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and of ensuring that it would not be used by terrorists to escape punishment.

60. The elimination of terrorism would require: adherence to the principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations; the political will of all States to prevent terrorism and to implement the conventions that laid the groundwork for a coherent legal regime to deal with the problem; increased cooperation in the exchange of information on terrorism and the apprehension and punishment of terrorists; the equal treatment of all acts of terrorism, regardless of the nationality of the perpetrators or the place the crime was committed; the avoidance of a double standard in dealing with domestic terrorism and international terrorism on the grounds that the former was less serious than the latter; a commitment not to shelter, train, finance or encourage terrorists or incite them to commit terrorist acts in other States; the establishment of clear criteria to differentiate between acts of terrorism and the exercise of the political freedoms guaranteed to individuals by international conventions and national constitutions; and the adoption of measures to ensure that persons seeking asylum had not participated in terrorist acts in another country.

61. The international community must cooperate in finding the necessary resources to confront and eliminate terrorism and isolate those who promoted and encouraged it. It was important to preserve the consensus achieved at previous sessions in considering the item, and his delegation would spare no effort to achieve that goal. It was to be hoped that there would be a prompt response to the call by the President of Egypt for the convening of an international conference on terrorism and its elimination.

62. Mr. WANG Xuexian (China) said that his Government had always opposed international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Since terrorist activities were international in nature, his Government believed that States must strengthen cooperation among themselves, abide strictly by their international obligations and implement effective measures to prevent and eliminate terrorist acts. At the same time, the international community should study the root causes of international terrorism and the social basis for its existence and development, with the aim of gradually reducing and eliminating it through joint efforts.

63. His Government had taken a number of significant steps to combat international terrorism. First, it had acceded to three international conventions on the prevention of aerial hijacking, along with other international conventions. In 1984 China had joined the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), strengthening cooperation with police authorities in other countries to prevent and punish crimes, including international terrorist activities. Second, China had enacted domestic legislation providing an effective foundation for preventing, combating and eliminating international terrorist activities. Third, a set of measures had been adopted to strengthen border controls and to safeguard internationally protected persons and aviation. A special agency had been established to conduct investigation and research into the patterns and characteristics of international terrorist activities and to promote data exchanges and cooperation among States in the field of counter-terrorism.

64. Since the origins, evolution and background of international terrorism were extremely complex, the international community had not yet reached a consensus on a legal definition of the concept. That situation hampered concerted international action and effective cooperation between States.

65. His Government opposed any infringement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and national unity of States or interference in the internal affairs of other States in the name of combating international terrorism. In accordance with universally recognized principles of international law, every State was entitled to exercise its inalienable right to self-determination by appropriate means.

66. Mr. DAHAB (Sudan) reaffirmed his delegation's condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Terrorist acts could not be justified on any pretext whatsoever.

67. As the Committee had been charged with the task of developing effective measures to combat terrorism, his delegation proposed that the Organization should: urge States to ratify the existing regional and international treaties on combating terrorism; fill the gaps in the international legal framework by adopting conventions to cover areas not yet dealt with in existing treaties, such as drug trafficking, terrorist bombings and the poisoning of drinking water; and condemn the activities of groups that resorted to violence in order to advance their political aims and depriving such groups of propaganda opportunities.

68. His delegation stressed the importance of defining terrorism so that acts of terrorism which were universally condemned would not be confused with legitimate acts of self-defence recognized in the Charter of the United Nations. A definition of terrorism would prevent the use of terrorism as a political expedient and a means of exerting pressure on States to change their policies.

69. Among the measures recommended by the Ministerial Conference on Terrorism was the exchange of information among States regarding terrorist acts. The lack of such exchanges had complicated the efforts to investigate the assassination attempt directed against the President of Egypt in June 1995. His Government had vehemently condemned that act and had expressed its continuing desire to cooperate with all parties with a view to resolving the matter.

70. If terrorism was to be eradicated, its root causes must be eliminated. That could not be achieved by legal instruments alone. His delegation was grateful to UNESCO for its ambitious programme to combat terrorism by spreading a culture of peace. It was important to avoid labelling certain cultures as promoting terrorism, since all cultures condemned terrorism.

71. Mrs. KALEMA (Uganda) said that terrorism violated fundamental human rights and threatened the sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations as well as international peace and security. Uganda strongly condemned all acts of terrorism irrespective of the motivations and the perpetrators involved. During the past year, tensions had increased in the Middle East, the situation in Burundi had become more volatile and various other terrorist attacks had taken place, as the Secretary-General had noted in his report (A/51/336). Many more

terrorist acts had gone unreported. The international community must therefore reaffirm its commitment to combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and the United Nations must consider practical measures to prevent that scourge.

72. The Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism was a significant step in the right direction. The Declaration condemned all acts of terrorism as criminal and unjustifiable and put States under the obligation not to condone terrorism and to take appropriate measures at all levels to eliminate it. The General Assembly should build upon the progress made since the adoption of the Declaration in 1994 and continue to urge States to take effective measures against terrorism.

73. The need for States to become parties to the Conventions against terrorism and to implement them was of paramount importance. A high level of participation in those instruments not only enhanced international cooperation but also ensured that those found guilty of terrorist crimes would not find safe haven anywhere in the world. Uganda was examining the instruments which it had not yet ratified with a view to becoming a party to them and urged other States to do likewise.

74. Effective regional cooperation and coordination through the sharing of information, prosecution or extradition of those accused of terrorist acts, law enforcement and legal assistance would also contribute significantly to the elimination of terrorism. The Government of Uganda remained ready to work with other States towards the achievement of that objective.

75. Mr. PETRELLA (Argentina) said that the subject of terrorism had special resonance in Argentina, which in recent years had been the victim of two brutal acts of terrorism that had resulted in great loss of life. Those acts had demonstrated that in today's interdependent world, neither distance nor frontiers made any nation secure from the global scourge of terrorism.

76. The fight against terrorism required, first of all, a firm commitment on the part of every State to cooperate and coordinate its efforts to combat terrorist acts at the national level, not to provide assistance, refuge or support to the perpetrators or participants in terrorist activities, and to strengthen and develop its national legislation to include provisions for the prosecution or extradition of the authors of such acts.

77. It was for those reasons that his Government had during the previous year invited other South American States, the United States of America and Canada to participate in consultations aimed at strengthening their cooperation for the prevention and elimination of international terrorism. Officials in various areas of competence had taken part in the consultations, at which national experiences had been exchanged and the threat posed by terrorism from various sources had been examined.

78. In March 1996, Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay had signed an agreement to prevent and combat terrorism in the frontier areas of the three countries. The following month, an Inter-American Specialized Conference on Terrorism had been held in Lima, Peru, which had concluded with the adoption of the Lima

Declaration and a plan of action for hemispheric cooperation. All of those initiatives were aimed at adopting specific and practical measures to promote the exchange of information and cooperation by judicial, police and intelligence authorities for the prevention and punishment of terrorist activities within a framework of democracy.

79. Many and varied instruments had been adopted at the international level to strengthen international cooperation against terrorism. Among the most recent initiatives, Argentina welcomed the final document adopted at the Ministerial Conference on Terrorism of the countries of the Group of Seven and the Russian Federation and the Sharm-el-Sheik Statement. Also of value was the statement on terrorism made by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the five permanent members of the Security Council on 26 September 1996. It was imperative to secure due respect for and universal participation in the numerous existing international conventions.

80. Argentina was convinced that the United Nations had a vital role to play. The Security Council and the General Assembly bore special responsibility for coordinating international action against terrorist acts, which represented a clear threat to security. In keeping with that conviction, Argentina had drawn the Council's attention in 1994 to the cruel attack on the headquarters of a Jewish association which had taken place in July of that year. He regretted that the Council had not seen fit to convene a formal meeting to discuss that act, which, by virtue of its nature and massive scale, merited consideration by that organ of the international community.

81. With respect to the role of the General Assembly, Argentina welcomed the adoption in 1994 of the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, the most unequivocal condemnation of international terrorism ever pronounced by that body. His delegation also took note of the important new proposals for combating terrorism that had been put forward during the current session.

82. Mr. DANESH-YAZDI (Islamic Republic of Iran) welcomed the Secretary-General's report (A/51/336), which provided a useful basis for discussion.

83. During the past 15 years, his country had witnessed many different forms of terrorism directed against the Iranian people, government officials, public places and places of worship, as well as sabotage, aerial hijackings and attacks on Iranian diplomatic agents and premises in other countries. However, terrorism was not confined to certain countries or regions; it posed a serious threat to all countries, regardless of their military power, economic development and geographical location, and therefore required a concerted international response.

84. First, combating terrorism required the adoption of a comprehensive approach at the national, regional and international levels. A sectoral approach to the problem, which appeared to have gained support in some segments of the international community, might bring limited success in some areas, but could not be a panacea.

85. Second, the definition of terrorism had long been a thorny issue for the international community. So long as certain basic principles of international relations were disregarded by some members of the international community, power politics would prevail, and the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations would be diminished. Nevertheless, counter-terrorism efforts must take account of the struggles of peoples under foreign oppression and occupation.

86. Terrorism jeopardized internaticnal cooperation and relations between States. Not only groups and individuals were guilty of terrorist acts, however. A State which harboured or assisted organizations and persons involved in terrorist activities or which allocated funds for covert or subversive operations against other States not only engaged in State terrorism but also undermined global efforts to combat the scourge. All States must categorically condemn and reject terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, regardless of the identity of the victims or the political tendencies and objectives of the perpetrators. States must refuse to provide safe haven for terrorists and terrorist organizations. Unfortunately, the refugee systems of some States had been exploited by certain well-known terrorists and their networks in order to escape apprehension and prosecution.

87. More than rhetoric, global efforts to eliminate terrorism required seriousness and political will. States should refrain from levelling politically motivated accusations or engaging in baseless and unsubstantiated propaganda against other States, groups or regions. Such practices did not help to resolve the problem of terrorism and did a disservice to the international effort to deal with it.

88. The Islamic Republic of Iran was a party to most of the conventions mentioned in the Secretary-General's report and was committed to its obligations under them. It had developed and implemented certain measures at the regional level to combat terrorist activities in the area. The eradication of that evil phenomenon, however, was beyond the capability of a single country and required global cooperation and coordination. His delegation was committed to participating actively in global efforts to combat terrorism. Accordingly, while it would welcome any initiative aimed at consolidating existing measures to that end, it hoped that the Committee would reach consensus through constructive deliberations on proposals, taking into account the concerns of all Member States.

89. Mr. GHASSAN (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his country disapproved of all forms of terrorism, whether committed by individuals or States, and especially of the terrorism in which Israel engaged in the occupied Palestinian territory, southern Lebanon and the occupied Syrian Golan. Israel continued to defy international law by refusing to withdraw from those areas and to accept a Palestinian State. However, the right of peoples to engage in legitimate struggle against occupation and for self-determination by whatever means they deemed appropriate was embodied in the Charter of the United Nations and had recently been reaffirmed in the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations.

90. To speak of terrorism in the context of legitimate resistance to foreign occupation was to deceive world public opinion. On the other hand, the use of violence for its own sake was incompatible with humanitarian ideals and was properly termed "terrorism"; it was thus to be condemned in all its forms. His country had always insisted on the formulation of a clear definition of terrorism because it had itself suffered greatly from the phenomenon and continued to suffer from it in the occupied Arab territories.

91. Consideration of the issue of international terrorism had long been hampered by the absence of well-defined and internationally agreed criteria to enable the international community to differentiate clearly between terrorism and legitimate national struggle. His delegation believed that terrorism could be defined as the commission of acts of murder, assassination, bombing, hostage-taking or the seizure of aircraft or ships in order to provoke a state of terror for political purposes, whether by individuals or States and whether against other individuals or other States, in circumstances other than those of legitimate armed conflict for liberation from all forms of foreign domination or from colonial, occupying, racist or other forces, and, in particular, when undertaken by liberation movements recognized by regional and international organizations.

92. The Palestinians, who had been deprived of their homeland by Israel and scattered among Arab and other countries, could not be regarded as terrorists because they were defending their land and their people against occupation. The situation was the same with respect to the resistance in southern Lebanon, which had been occupied ever since the 1982 Israeli incursion: such resistance was legitimate. It was Israel's actions and its failure to withdraw despite the relevant Security Council resolutions that constituted acts of terrorism. In the last week of September 1996 some 80 Palestinians had been shot dead by the Israeli army, further proof that occupation was the most extreme form of terrorism.

93. For many years his country had been calling for the convening of an international conference under United Nations auspices to define terrorism and differentiate between it and the struggle of peoples for national liberation. It had also called for the establishment of a committee on the definition of terrorism and had expressed its readiness to cooperate in the work of that body. Those who maintained that such a conference would be of no avail and that it would be impossible to arrive at consensus were in reality rejecting international cooperation to combat terrorism and sought only to impose their own erroneous definition of the phenomenon.

94. His country had acceded to the Tokyo Convention of 1963, the Hague Convention of 1970, the Montreal Convention of 1971 and the 1973 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents, and its laws imposed strict penalties on perpetrators of criminal terrorist acts. It looked forward to the elimination of violence in the Middle East through the implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace as the sole guarantee of security.

95. Mr. PFIRTER (Observer for Switzerland) noted that during the previous year terrorism had shown the world of just what hideous acts it was capable. His Government therefore welcomed the proposals put forward by France, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States of America to combat that scourge, and particularly the proposal to elaborate a convention for the suppression of terrorist attacks involving the use of explosives and nuclear terrorism.

96. It was important to prevent the abuse by undeserving individuals of the right to asylum. Those who were champions of cruelty to other human beings must be prevented from undermining the august humanitarian institution of the right to asylum. Switzerland therefore supported the aims of the declaration proposed by the United Kingdom.

97. While his country was not a member of the Organization and could not therefore presume to suggest what action it should take in a particular field, it was a party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. On that basis, and given its long humanitarian tradition, Switzerland questioned whether certain paragraphs of the proposed declaration did not run the risk of reinterpreting certain provisions of the Convention which, historically, had been quite clear. Any reinterpretation which modified the provisions of the Convention would be tantamount to an amendment thereto, something that could only be undertaken by the bodies specified in the Convention itself. He welcomed the statement by the representative of the United Kingdom that that was not the aim of the proposed declaration. Switzerland was of the view, however, that the aims of the declaration could best be achieved on the basis of the established interpretation of the 1951 Convention. The international community must not allow the urgency of the task of combating terrorism to lead it to violate other key principles of international relations.

The meeting rose at 1.25 p.m.